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CONTACT:  
Sue Walitsky 202-224-4524 or  
202-320-0819

## **CARDIN CALLS UPROAR OVER CONSTRUCTION AN EXCUSE TO DELAY NEGOTIATIONS, URGES ABBAS TO RETURN TO DIRECT TALKS WITH ISRAEL**

Washington, DC – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee**, released the following statement regarding criticism of recently proposed Israeli housing units in East Jerusalem.

“Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is right to call the current uproar over planning for new construction in East Jerusalem ‘overblown.’ Jerusalem is the undivided capital of the State of Israel. This episode seems to be yet another excuse for the Palestinian Authority to delay returning to negotiations toward a real two-state solution and peace agreement. Israel has been a ready and willing partner to continue direct negotiation. It is time for President Abbas to come back to the negotiating table.”

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